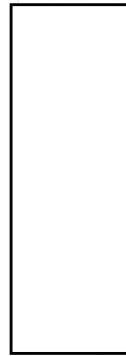


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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

INFORMATION REPORT

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1. According to news broadcasts by Radio Prague on 16 Mar 52, a meeting of the national delegates to the Union of Czechoslovak Firemen's Convention was held in Prague on 15 - 16 Mar 52. Delegates came from all parts of the CSR. The main speaker was Minister of the Interior Vaclav Nosek. Parts of his speech were rebroadcast. In his speech, Nosek stressed the necessity of training hundreds of thousands of people in combating fires and in giving first aid. He spoke also of future close cooperation between the government, state security forces and firemen. As a consequence of this meeting, new men were appointed to head this organization. Frantisek Svoboda was appointed president and Karel Randak, general secretary.
2. This firemen's convention, I believe, marked the completion of the reorganization of the fire prevention service. Voluntary service has a long tradition in Czechoslovakia and is fairly popular. Before and during the German occupation, thousands of volunteers were organized into the Union of Czechoslovak Firemen /Svaz Ceskoslovenskych Hasicu/ and were trained in first aid, civilian A4 defense and fire prevention.
3. After 1950 this organization was reorganized to better serve the Communist Regime. Political reliability and indoctrination were made primary programs of the organization. Today it seems that the entire training program of the organization is under military supervision. In his speech of 16 Mar 52, Nosek's remarks regarding close cooperation with the security forces might indicate the importance of this organization in civil defense. This probably stems from the fact that many fires are started by sabotage and necessitate close cooperation between security forces and the Union of Czechoslovak Firemen. The recent state emphasis on training such a great number of people in combating fires clearly indicates mass training for civilian defense.

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